Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0509NH-1 for Nashua School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a clear and comprehensive vision for the use of the RTT-D grant funds. All four core areas are addressed and the applicant displays a strong understanding of training students for challenges and technologies not yet known or created. The applicant also describes an overall strategy for implementation, based on the best practices used in the district's turnaround schools. A logic model is provided that demonstrates a strong understanding of how to connect the assurance areas with goals, specific strategies and projected outcomes. The applicant presents a strong and coherent reform vision for personalizing student learning.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a description of the process used to determine the participating schools and grade levels. The decision to include all students and grade levels was based on feedback from the teacher's union and the board of education, as the district's original plan included focusing solely on the high schools and implies a strong reliance on engagement.

(b) A list of participating schools is provided.

(c) The total numbers of participating students and educators are provided. It is unclear how the district determined the number of high-need students, as it higher than the number of low-income students, but does not state which additional students were included in the high-need classification.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes a high-quality plan describing the major tasks for each of the four assurance areas. Each strategy is supported by the major tasks, persons responsible, steps by year, the desired outcome and the ability to sustain each task.

All strategies are linked to the overall vision of creating personalizing learning environments for students and the logic model. The plan is thorough, aligned and presents a coherent vision of the desired outcomes and the implementation steps.

All schools are included in the application and practices will be taken to scale simultaneously.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	7

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides a strong variety of goals related to student performance on summative assessments, including both proficiency status and growth. The goals seem ambitious and achievable for the majority of performance measures and subgroups, with the exception of English Language Learners (LEP/ELL). The post-grant goals for ELL students are not ambitious enough.

The applicant does not provide rationale for why some measures are only expected to improve incrementally each year, while other measures are expected to improve 25% each year.

(b) The applicant provides goals related to decreasing achievement gaps, but it is difficult to understand what they are predicting. It is also unclear what the SES subgroup relates to (assumed low socio-economic status).

(c) The applicant provides goals related to the graduation rate that seem ambitious and reasonable.

(d) The applicant provides goals related to college enrollment which are ambitious for some categories, but not others. The post-grant goal for overall is 84% and 60% for LEP & IEP students. A 24% difference Is not an equitable goal, nor does it imply that enough resources were provided to students (especially ELL students) during grant application.

(e) The applicant provides goals related to postsecondary degree attainment , which are ambitious and reasonable. Goals are not broken out the goals by subgroup.

Despite the lower goals for ELL/LEP students, as a whole the applicant proposes ambitious and reasonable goals for the majority of students across the various performance measures.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	10

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The applicant provides evidence of its ability to improve student performance in some areas. The applicant states that the district has struggled with changing student demographics and scores have not improved as much as desired, especially in relation to math. 4-year histories for graduation rates and college enrollment are not provided. Improvements have been made, but are not substantial.

(b) The applicant states that improvements have been made in the district's low-performing schools. Some student performance data is provided and shows growth in reading, math and science. While the applicant discusses various practices implemented in the low-performing schools throughout the application, it is unclear if there is an overall strategy for turning around low-performing schools. The applicant also states that the schools are in restructuring, but doesn't't state what that means or if the school's are (or have been) part of the federal School Improvement Grant program. The applicant frequently discusses scaling up the strategies implemented at the low-performing schools, but neglects to cite what those specific strategies or conditions are.

(c) The applicant states that performance data is readily available to students, parents and educators and is used to inform instruction. A new system is currently being launched to increase the access to and use of data as well. The applicant does not include information on the accessibility of data and student performance to families of the growing number of ELL students.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant includes clear evidence that all four expenditure areas are addressed and are made available to the public. The applicant also provides an extensive explanation on the transparency and accessibility of all information related to the operation of the district.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The SEA has a strong history of providing autonomy to LEAs over most decisions and the LEA has utilized that autonomy effectively. The state sets minimum requirements, and the LEA has elaborated on or enhanced those goals. An example of which includes the district creating four various options for obtaining a diploma, three of which require more credits than the state minimum. The district has also implemented a variety of policies that use this autonomy and directly relate to, and enhance the goals of, the RTT-D proposal.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) The teacher union supports the proposal and was highly involved in the creation of the plan and proposal. Feedback from teachers helped build the plan and was considered crucial for development of the initiative.

(b) A variety of letters of support are included. While a letter from an adult learning center is included, the application could be strengthened from further support and partnerships with other community-based organizations (especially those who target at-risk students, i.e. those who will participate in the center proposed in the competitive preference priority).

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the proposal, the applicant demonstrates a history of recognizing a problem (for example poor literacy achievement) and creating a plan to address it. Such initiatives have resulted in success in the past. The district is currently working to improve math instruction.

The applicant discusses a variety of needs and gap areas, but does not include a high-quality plan for an analysis of current needs and gaps.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	18

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a) (b) The applicant includes a clear table that details each academic focus area, supported by various activities, projects, programs and deliverables. The applicant proposes to implement an extraordinarily strong group of practices and programs to improve student learning and to personalize learning environments for students. The activities all seem aligned to the vision and the rest of the narrative proposal, and are predominantly supported by the budget narrative. While extremely strong, various pieces could be further supported by additional detail. Due to the comprehensive nature and the clear vision for student learning, the identified minor weaknesses do not significantly reduce the quality of the proposed learning plan.

The following strategies will be used to provide a more personalized learning environment: increased access to and the use of student data; electronic portfolios; mentorships and community connections; access to academic and technical courses; college and career readiness tracking software that includes personality profiles, roadmap of courses, career interests and college applications; the re-introduction of an advisory block, and increased use of internships.

College fairs and college nights will be used to increase awareness of colleges and the process, and the district plans to offer a variety of common application, FAFSA, and scholarship supports. The proposal also includes the plan to establish a mentoring program for high school seniors and college students. A pilot program currently exists, but the district would like to expand the opportunities and to include a broader variety of colleges and universities.

The district includes a variety of programs to reach at-risk students, to proactively identify them in 8th grade and to support them throughout high school. A similar program is being explored for 5th graders to target students even earlier.

Extended Learning Opportunities are cited as another way for students to personalize their learning and gain career experiences.

Allowing students to demonstrate mastery through inquiry-based learning experiences and performance assessments is in development.

The applicant proposes different strategies for each grade grouping (i.e. elementary, middle and high), which demonstrates a well-thought out plan and thorough needs analysis (even though no process for a needs analysis was discussed).

The applicant is also currently developing a laboratory school that will feature four teachers and 100 middle school students.

The type of practices that will be first piloted at this school include: blended learning, looping, changing grade levels, and performance assessments and indicates a strong desire to try out and scale up innovative programs.

Overall, the applicant cites a variety of strong and aligned programs, strategies, and technologies that support all of the sub-criterions a and b, but it is unclear how each student will develop an individualized learning plan, i.e. what is the actual process to develop a plan for each student? How is each plan monitored? How do some of the activities directly relate to personalized learning, i.e. how will the "embedded tablet technology in all schools with rapid growth" create personalized learning environments?

The district also plans to develop a second 6-12 vertically aligned curriculum. The applicant does not provide detail on how this curriculum compares to or enhances the existing curriculum.

The applicant includes a focus on bringing language instruction to elementary students, far earlier than conventional programs. This initiative is not explicitly referenced in the budget.

(c) The applicant does not directly address what mechanisms will be in place to ensure that students understand which resources are available to them and how to use them, with the exception of some supports through the Center proposed in the competitive preference priority. Technology support staff are proposed for the teachers, but it is unclear if they will also be available for student assistance.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	17

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) (b) While extremely strong components for improving instruction, PD and leadership, various pieces could be further supported by additional detail. Due to the comprehensive nature and the clear vision for improving teaching and leading, the identified weaknesses do not significantly reduce the quality of the proposed plan for adults.

Teacher professional development will focus on understanding how students learn to better personalize their experiences, as well as on the structures that will support the new systems.

With the advent of additional college-ready programs (i.e. PSAT, AP), teachers will have increased access to better data collection and analysis, lesson plans, and other instructional tools.

The applicant proposes the creation of a curriculum review team that will act as consultants for teachers and the district, bringing new practices into the classroom, while also ensuring stronger district alignment and building long-term capacity.

The district plans to implement a district-wide data team that will include support at each school and a lead data administrator. These staff will assist teachers and administrators with the creation and use of data reports.

There is a plan in place to develop 40 additional STEM- and ELL-focused teachers. The district is also moving towards linking teacher certification to student learning, which will be an innovative practice once implemented.

The budget narrative also explains that ten full-time staff will be hired to support teachers in how to use technology effectively. Three full-time system administrators will provide overall system support.

The teachers' union will be involved in the development of a PD Master Plan.

The district recently revised a principal evaluation rubric that is aligned to ISLLC standards.

The applicant proposes to use RTT-D funds to increase the number of teachers and administrators pursuing national board certification.

The applicant proposes to use vendors to provide the PD to teachers, but at this point, the applicant does not specify how vendors will be selected, monitored, evaluated, or what topics they will instruct.

(c) The application demonstrates a desire to create personalized learning and the district will incorporate a variety of tools, data, training, and resources to do this, but the overall structure of the changes are unclear. While all strong individual components, there is a lack of integration.

The use of the teacher evaluation system is mentioned, but detail on how it will inform PD needs and continuous improvement is not clearly defined.

The applicant seems to have a system of support defined regarding the use of data use and IT supports for teachers.

(d) The applicant includes information on increasing the quality of teachers and administrators, especially in hard-to-staff subjects, but does not include a high-quality plan to address hard-to-staff schools and subjects. The budget narrative includes some information on providing funding for principal academies/institutes. The details on what those programs look like or how

those trained staff are distributed is not defined.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant proposes the hiring of a grant manager to guide implementation and the creation of a Grant Advisory Team to monitor, evaluate, and adapt the plan as needs change. Several committees or councils are also referenced (i.e. data teams, the expanded number of curriculum specialists, high school teachers working with middle school teachers).

(b) While the application clearly demonstrates the district's autonomy over decision-making authority, such autonomy at the school level is not addressed. The roles and autonomies of school leadership teams and principals are not discussed.

(c) The SEA and the LEA both support and allow students to retain credit through demonstrations of competency, as opposed to seat time. The applicant includes specific examples of how career-technical education students can show competency in physical science by passing the district's physical science end of year assessment.

(d) The application includes a variety of learning programs and styles including competency assessments and extended learning opportunities. The frequency and ability to demonstrate mastery in various ways is unclear. The applicant does not provide examples or explain if a CTE student would be able to show mastery in physical science through a non-assessment-type project or portfolio. The applicant proposes to complete the writing competencies for mastery demonstration and recovery courses during the current academic year.

Students can also transfer a small number of middle school credits to their high school transcripts. A policy to ensure this is done systematically is currently being evaluated by a district-level council. Students may apply for a core diploma the fall of their junior year, which allows them to enter military service, begin apprenticeships or begin work as early as possible.

(e) IEP (SPED) students often apply for the core (fewest requirements) diploma, but the applicant does not state what types of supports are provided to those students if they desire a full academic diploma. The district also cites the use of Alternative Learning Plans that may be used by certain at-risk students. Such plans are extremely personalized and tailored to the individual students' interests and needs. It is unclear which students take advantage of an Alternative Learning Plan or how the plan ensures rigor.

Due to the increasing ELL population, historically low ELL performance, and known increasing subgroup, the applicant does not provide sufficient additional resources that will specifically target ELL and SPED students.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

a) The applicant proposes a number of technology-related expenses: tablets, software, upgrading wi-fi structures, and other devices, but does not describe how many students per device, or how low-income students will have equitable access to technology and supports either in or out of schools. The center presented in the competitive preference priority will provide parents and students some access to technology outside of normal school hours, but it is unclear what type of supports will be available to them.

(b) The applicant describes the Technology Committee and its Master Plan, which is designed to continuously monitor technology and support students and teachers. IT specialists will be hired to support the teachers. The applicant does not address how specific supports will be provided to students. A data manager will be employed to respond to the immediate data needs of teachers and administrators.

(c) The applicant includes some information on students and parents being able to view data, but does not state if parents and students will be able to export their information to use it in companion with other programs or tools.

(d) The applicant does not address if the LEAs and schools use interoperable data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	14

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes an ongoing analysis and improvement process, led by the Assistant Superintendent for Accountability and Assessment and supported by the data manager. The applicant proposes the creation of a comprehensive program evaluation that will look at all outcomes and performance measures, and will evaluate the most efficient, effective, relevant and useful outcomes. The creation of this evaluation will be supported external consultants, which allows the district teams to build internal capacity. A more detailed plan for the evaluation process, including the rigorousness of the evaluation is not discussed.

The applicant will share information on implementation progress and results through an annual Improvement Showcase, which will be used to publicize the initiatives, share promising practices, and to revise action plans as needed.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant will present information to the public through an annual Improvement Showcase, which will bring together school-level teams to share knowledge and updates on the implementation process. The school and district websites will all include updates, including budgets and the strategic plan. An e-newsletter will also be issued.

The grant manager will gather data and comply with additional public and ED requests.

Despite the strong role the teachers' union had in the development of the proposal, ongoing and direct strategies to communicate and work with the union throughout implementation are not provided.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes individual performance measures for the overall community, as well as each grade level, with a focus on SPED, ELL, Latino, and SES (which is assumed to stand for low-socio-economic status). The applicant also describes the rationale for tracking all student promotions and retentions. Additional PreK assessments and measurements are being developed and K-2 students will begin using the online i-ready assessment system in 2013-14.

The applicant provides adequate rationale for removing the attendance performance measure, due to moving away from seat time. Instead, discipline, the use of suspensions and punctuality will be used as non-cognitive indicators of growth. While it makes sense to shift away from attendance as a performance measure, attendance should still be monitored and used as an early warning indicator for at-risk students.

The applicant provides sufficient rationale for the various performance measures, addresses the frequency of assessments, and provides information on how performance measures will be used to inform instruction and interventions.

The goals for highly effective teachers and principals are feasible, but not ambitious. If the district percentages are currently as low as stated (some grade levels with 0%), stronger programs to increase the percentage of students with highly-effective and effective teachers and principals would be expected. Also, some of the performance measures do not make sense. For example, in elementary grade 1, the table shows that 93% of students currently have a highly-effective teacher, yet the goal for year 1 is 5%, slowly increasing to 20%. It appears that the applicant did not develop goals for each school based on their current needs and realities. Such disparities are seen throughout the highly effective and effective tables.

The applicant's goals for reducing retainment rates in high school are ambitious and seem reasonable.

The applicant's goals for reading at grade level for ELL students seems extremely low (25% post-grant) for elementary grades. Some of the performance measures do not clearly align to each other, i.e. 99% of ELL students to have C's or higher in grade 5 post grant, yet the DIBELS goals are extremely low. If a student cannot read on grade level in grade 3, it is unlikely that he/she will be able to have C's or higher the following year in Grade 4.

Some of the performance measures demonstrate progress much more clearly than others (i.e. the on-track percentages are already high, so there isn't much room for improvement, vs. the number of students receiving C's or better for college- and career-readiness, which includes ambitious yet reasonable goals.

While tracking retentions and promotions is a unique measure, it is unclear how systematic the district is in promoting students who aren't ready to move on to the next grade. If the district is moving away from seat time, how are students being evaluated

for their promotion readiness?

The applicant does not include information on how will it review and improve the performance measures over time.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes to include cost effectiveness in the overall evaluation of all grant-funded activities. Discovering which strategies are the most-effective and the most cost-efficient will allow the district to plan for future years once the grant period ends. Feedback from teachers participating in professional development and the observations of consulting teacher leaders will also be used to evaluate the long-term impact of the various PD activities. Staff surveys, with a focus on technology teachers, will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the various technological enhancements.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	8

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant states that other grant-funded projects will be incorporated into this initiative, i.e. i3 innovation grant for NENPP, but the amount of support and direct connections to the proposal and the specified project budgets are not explicit. No other sources of funding are identified.

The applicant includes a list of projects in the budget narrative, but the budget tables are broken out by assurance area. It is difficult to align the two types of budgets to figure out how much funding is being allocated to each project each year and for what purpose.

The applicant proposes to use grant funds to support struggling teachers with a co-teaching model. While improving teacher quality is imperative, it is questionable if this strategy directly links to creating personalized learning environments for students.

The budget narrative is strong and thorough, but does not necessarily tie back to the project/assurance budgets.

The programs/software systems, personnel, and technology devices being purchased align to the rest of the grant proposal and seem to be reasonable estimates.

The applicant adequately narrative identifies one time vs. ongoing investments.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	7

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has explored the resource sustainability of the initiative in advance and proposes that only $1,044,789 will be incorporated into the operating budget post-grant. The applicant developed a non-personnel post-grant budget and states that $493,512 will be needed to sustain the off-site community center, the progress monitoring software, technology upgrades, and annual fees for an ELA program. The sources of future funded for the specified on-going costs are not specified.

The application is personnel heavy and while the applicant acknowledges the need to build capacity (especially through Lead Teachers) it does not appear that the applicant has planned a phase-out strategy to decrease the intensity of the hired staff over the course of the four years. The results will not be sustainable without building a phase-out plan for the various supports.

While thinking about sustainability has taken place (as evidence by the transcript from a board meeting), the applicant does not include a high-quality plan to address sustainability of structures and processes.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

(1) The applicant proposes establishing a Central Registration Center, which will also act as a Parent Resource Center. A variety of community partners (including adult learning, mental health professionals, and other state service coordinators) will provide services to students and families as needed, but the applicant does not state if other public or private resources will support the center as well. The applicant includes a letter of support from the adult learning center and provides examples of other types of support agencies, but does not demonstrate any type of formal partnerships with other groups. Many of the other service providers may be affiliated with the district, so a separate letter of support may not be necessary. Increased access to technology could be more explicitly defined, i.e. open computer lab hours for students and parents, tech support for problems, etc.

(2) The applicant includes desired results/performance measures that do align with the RTT-D plan, including parent satisfaction, satisfaction of other partner organizations, improved student achievement of affiliated students, and various indicators that imply a decrease in the achievement gap. Education and family/community group indicators were provided.

(3) The applicant provides adequate information on how it plans to track the selected indicators. The performance measure data will not be used to target additional resources to students and families. But, the initial family intake and communications will include an analysis of social-emotional, behavioral, socio-economic, mental health or educational needs. It is unclear what that intake process/form would look like. The resource center is designed to serve all incoming students to the district, with a focus on at-risk/high-need students. It may not be necessary to scale some of these services up to the rest of the district. Although, it should be noted that this type of streamlining processes, aligning resources, and support family's individual needs could be scaled up across the district.

(4) The applicant doesn't't explicitly state how services and resources provided at the center would be integrated with education and the operations of the schools. A communication plan to transmit messages between the center and the schools has not yet been defined.

(5) The center would take away some of the work that individual secretaries currently do, which will ensure better data collection at the district-level, while also providing a more simple process for families. The applicant does not describe how the center will build the capacity and staff in the participating schools, yet the center is well aligned to the goals and vision of the RTT-D proposal. The applicant does not describe how the center will provide a needs and assets analysis of meeting family needs, a decision-making process to implement and evaluate individual supports, or the level of intensity for engaging parents in the decision-making process. The center director/coordinator will do much of this work, but it is unclear how many students and families the center is expected to serve. While all useful and crucial support services, the applicant neglected to specify how the Center will personalize learning and academics for students, or tie the services back to the broader RTT-D initiative.

6) The center identifies some performance measures, but does not identify specific goals (with the exception of an 85% satisfaction rate).

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant establishes a strong and clear vision for enhancing services and programs already being offered by the district. It is clear that RTT-D funds would support the district's implementation of personalized learning environments. The state and the district are already launching some very innovative programs (i.e. competency based promotion vs seat time and extended learning opportunities), but the applicant doesn't necessarily present RTT-D funding as a way to bring in other innovative practices, but would instead be used to scale up pilot programs and to increase quality instruction to ensure that the above programs and structures are effective. The application is weak on the services and interventions for ELL students, but it does describe a clear vision and plans to address each of the core assurance areas.

Total	210	175

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0509NH-2 for Nashua School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has set forth a vision that leverages all its resources in order for all of its students to have access to an educational system that prepares them fthe skills needed to deal with the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century. This vision includes a well thought out plan that when executed, will produce a personalized learning environment that equips students with the skills needed in order to be successful. The applicant's approach to student achievement is consistently demonstrated in this narrative and demosntrates a heightened level of awareness for student achievement. The vision acknowledges and addresses the need for change and reform in order to produce the best learning environments for students. The vision is coherent and promotes a methodical approach to support students, teachers, parents and the community.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's approach to implementation ensures that the participating schools serving from Pre-K to 12:

- Low income/high-need students in all participating schools
- The 17 schools, identified in this application serve grades Pre-K to 12
- Participating LEA's identify as non-rural
- identified low achieving schools
- Data submitted supports identified number of participating students for four subgroup categories and to address all grade levels to insure that achievement is leveraged for all students across the district

Overall, the applicant's approach to implementing its reform proposal will support a high-quality LEA-level and school implementation for this proposal.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a detailed plan of reform and change in order to produce effective teachers who are able to support students as they successfully navigate through learning environments that fully prepare them to engage in the world beyond their geographical confines. The model produces students and teachers who are able to engage in productive change. The change occurs in incremental phases, broken down by tasks and assurance areas. The intended outcomes are supported with details to support sustainability of the assurance areas based upon the assigned strategy. The applicant's reform proposal consistently demonstrates a logical approach to carrying this to scale. Overall, the extent to which the applicant has a high quality plan for LEA-wide reform and change has been satisfactorily presented in this proposal.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant's vision is likely to result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity is high. The applicant's plan is ambitious in its first two years of implementation, in performance on summative assessments growth rate doubles during implementation year, and nearly 25% growth is projected each year thereafter, until the post-grant

goal is accomplished. This approach will result in long-term achievement gains. This example clearly established the goal areas set by the applicant will improved students outcomes. The goals are ambitious yet achievable for all students as well as identified subgroups.

- Significant outcomes proposed for summative assessments are ambitious but realistic in the context of this proposal
- Close all subgroup achievements by the 2017
- Anticipates graduation rates to improve and remain steady by during years 2016 and 2017
- College enrollment 2011-2012 reported 64.3% and continually increase
- Post secondary attainment is increased as a result of working relationship with Dartmouth College, which is a collaborative partner

Overall, the applicant has presented a vision that is likely to result in improved student learning and performance as a result of the increased equity demonstrated in these ambitious yet achievable goals.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated a clear record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching. The evidence strongly supports the applicant's ability to provide students with a personalized learning environment as a result of:

- Measures of success for both high-needs and advanced learners
- Decline in drop-out rate from over four year year period by nearly 6 percentage points
- Significant increase in number of students completing ELL programs successfully
- Consistent number of students taking AP exams and more than half of students scored a three or better
- Named to College Board AP Achievement List for significant increase in students enrolling in AP classes and earning high scores on AP exams
- 419 students earned college credit for completing specific high school courses
- Ledge Street school, one of five identified as being high poverty and lowest performing has demonstrated consistent improvement after restructuring in order to focus on student achievement in all subgroups
- Teachers piloted a new software designed to aligned to Common Core, monitors student progress in reading and math, and provides teachers with instant feedback on student progress

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has consistently demonstrated a track record of success over the last four years has been thoroughly supported.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Communication is a priority for this applicant which currently utilizes multiple ways to disseminate information to the public. The applicant operates within a state and local that requires a high level of transparency in public governance, which this LEA falls under. The applicant has an existing system to provide information pertaining to the expenditures of State and local funds in relationship to school level personnel salaries, instructional staff, teachers, and non-personnel expenditures. This process is also overseen by the LEA's Board of Education, who receive monthly school and district-level expenditure reports.

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated reasonable evidence of its ability to provide transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments.

	Available	Score
(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which each LEA has provided a State Context for implementation:

- The applicant has taken advantage of the autonomy by the State approach to progressive education by establishing a

minimum standards framework that supports local districts for creating approaches to personalized learning .

- This framework provides local school districts the autonomy when making decisions on how to approach personalized learning
- As a result of this high level of flexibility, while still meeting the State standards, at the local level the applicant has been able to use multiple policies to create a framework for innovation and transformation. The applicant has capitalized on the legislative policies:
  - High School Competency Assessments (Policy ILBAA),
  - Extended Learning Opportunities (Policy ILBH),
  - Alternative Learning Plans (Policy IHBI),
  - Alternative Credit Opportunities (ILBC)

that provide the framework for change in order to develop and implement a personalized learning environment.

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated evidence of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments to the full extent.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the LEA has demonstrated evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of the proposal and meaningful stakeholder support for the proposal has been extensive and documented. All letters communicate a high level of knowledge about the proposal and intended purposes, as well as a high level of support for the applicant's proposal. The applicant has letters from every key stakeholder needed or suggested for this criteria, if applicable.

- Collective bargaining representation engaged in the development of the proposal and recommendations are included in parts of the proposal
- Stakeholder engagement and support evidenced in transcript from Special BOE meeting detailing how applicant presenting completed RTT-D application to School Board
- Letters of support from PTOs and parents of students , students
- Mayor of Nashua, Donnalee Lozeau
- United States Congressman Charles Bass
- New Hampshire United States Senator Kelly Ayotte
- New Hampshire State Governor John Lynch

Overall, the applicant has demonstrated a high level of support from key stakeholders and this is clearly evidenced and documented in the proposal.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the each LEA has demonstrated evidence of a high quality plan for an analysis of the current status in implementing personalized learning environments and the logic behind it, is evident in that the applicant has a successful record in addressing some of the areas identified as challenges, such as achievement gaps, attendance, professional development, and technology. The applicant has provided evidence to demonstrate past success with interventions and positive behavior supports that have had a positive impact on student achievement. The applicant has identified attendance/absenteeism as a high need are to address in this proposal, in order to adequately address and reduce existing achievement gaps.

Overall, the applicant has sufficiently demonstrated evidence of thoughtful analysis of needs and gaps.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant has a high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalized learning environments in order to provide all students the support to graduate college-and-career ready has consistently demonstrated

the goals are ambitious yet achievable.The applicant has a provided a great amount of details in the proposal on how it will prepare students for college and careers.

The applicant's plan has a strong focus on competency based learning and curriculum that engages students and provides them relevant guidance in order to achieve their goals:

- Inclusive plan addresses multiple levels of needs for all learners (ELL, Students with Disabilities, High Needs)
- Cutting-edge technology to increase access and equity for students
- College and career curriculums to support personalized learning
- Research and evidence based instructional best practices to address 21st century skills
- The detailed plan for Professional Development for all teachers promotes and ensures the building of capacity

The applicant's plan places considerable emphasis on the use of technology as being the foundational core for an effective model of personalized learning environment for students and teachers. The cornerstone and foundation for this model will be ensuring students not only have the access to technology, but the appropriate curriculum resources and content learning experiences that can is easily integrated with technology.

Overall the applicant has presented a plan of good quality that solidly prepares and supports students and their families for personalized learning environments with multiple opportunities for achievement, access and equity tailored to their academic and environmental challenges.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan provides for improving learning and teaching that consistently plans for all educators to be provided with ongoing teaching opportunities and relevant professional development in order to effectively supports students in the personalized learning environment. The plan's specific details demonstrate a district wide approach to provide all schools with access to resources that have proven success, as well as build on the success. The applicant has created a plan that provides for multiple opportunities for successful learning and teaching for all students, by effective and highly effective teachers and principals. The applicant has also established a goals for teaching and leading that will result in:

- Consistent curriculum and professional development to insure fidelity implementation of all Common Core State Standards
- Collaboration with University of New Hampshire to develop and train teachers on STEM for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Focus on non-cognitive skills needed to prepare every student to be college- and career- ready
- Link student learning with teacher certification: PD accountability to promote teacher change
- Collaboration with Nashua Teachers Union to develop Professional Development Master Plan
- Personalized curriculum and technology support for teachers
- Adopting the American Federation of Teacher's framework as a guide in the collaboration process to insure that all district students receive instruction from effective and highly effective teachers and principals

The applicant's broad message is all students benefit when teachers and principals are using this model to adopt innovative learning tools in order to help teachers, the impact is greater on low-performing schools.

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students with the support to graduate college- and career-ready is reasonable.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator (as defined in this notice), and level of the education system (classroom, school, and LEA) with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed is strongly documented:

- Applicant currently plays a major role in providing professional development to all 17 schools in the district

- adopted standards that support personalized learning for all students
- School leadership teams in each school develop a building action plan that responds to goals of District's Strategic Plan
- Expand Alternative Credit Options to eliminate the existing credit cap in order to afford students greater access to other courses that lead to college and career readiness
- Ongoing creation/revision of competencies that give students multiple opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards in multiple comparable ways

Overall, the applicant presents an innovative high quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies that provide students with an appropriate level of support.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator, and level of the education system with the support and resources they need, when and where they are needed, is sufficient.

The applicant provides a detailed strategy outlining the purpose and context for the personalized learning environments in order to decrease achievement gaps and increase student achievement; the necessary and needed resources in support the goals and strategies in order to implement all strategies. The applicant acknowledges existing gaps due to language barriers and socio-economic challenges that maybe encountered by some of the students and families in this district, and how this proposal is an opportunity to remove those barriers and provide all students with multiple opportunities to not only receive information but also to access resources.

The applicant's plan takes a logical and methodical approach to LEA and school infrastructure, by addressing the critical areas needed to deliver the desired outcomes for this ambitious proposal. The applicant's narrative acknowledges that their Technology Committee has developed a technology plan that will provide for the continuous monitoring and building capacity for the technological needs of students and stakeholders. It would have been helpful to the reviewer if the applicant has included additional evidence of this plan.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant presents a high-quality plan that represents a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process that provides timely and regular feedback on progress toward project goals and opportunities for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

- 2009 adopted evaluation capacity building for sustainable evaluation practice by hiring Director of Assessment and Accountability
- District Data team coordinate activities with school improvement team, who will select the a focus area for exploration and develop the timeline for obtaining and analyzing data
- Logic model to guide evaluation to ensure data collection is organized by program element
- adoption of adaptive progress monitoring software, i-Ready, gives teacher access better assessment data
- Logic model allows for real-time evaluation process to address the applicant's outcome and performance measures
- information will be shared via internet, cable television and public meetings

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan for continuous improvement process is thorough. The plan goes into great length describing how this important this process will also be used to embed evaluation work into as a daily practice to ensure the project goals are being met. Because the applicant has adopted the logic model which uses a real time approach for gathering, and analyzing data, this method will allow for ongoing corrections and improvements during and after the term of the grant.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has an existing plan in place which uses multiple methods to provide ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders. The District Improvement Process will build on the existing model to communicate the progress of the plan.

- Currently have a database over 9,000 subscribers who receive weekly electronic newsletter
- Board of Education meetings and school news are on televised on local cable educational channel
- School websites post progress reports
- An annual Improvement Showcase will host a public event to share school level progress

Overall, the extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan to provide ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders is strong.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's evidence to support the criteria for the selected performance measures is not strongly supported due to the lack of complete data to support the performance measures. The selection of criteria is consistent with the rationale, which is to use performance measures that can be directly tied to improving student outcomes .

- Promotions vs retentions at each grade level for each subgroup: IEP, LEP, Latino, SES
- Measure punctuality rather than attendance since district is moving from seat time to competency based learning for college- and career- readiness
- Students on-track to college-and career-readiness (grades 4-12)
- Highly-effective instruction should result in substantial decrease in discipline rates (PreK-3)
- Laptops, tablets and upgraded wireless infrastructure will afford teachers to access student data in a more efficient and effective manner, in order to use results to inform and improve classroom instruction for students

Overall, the applicant has a high quality plan that presents with ambitious yet achievable measures.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's plan to a high-quality approach to continuously improve its plan is sound and reasonable. The applicant's plan demonstrates numerous examples that support how the plan provides for evaluating effectiveness of investments, as well as take creating multiple opportunities to improve and reevaluate effective best practices as well as improvements.

- rapid scale-up and dissemination of practices will create measurable, positive impacts for students
- support and development professional development
- sustainability of gains created during this period
- Ongoing monitoring using teacher surveys, focus questions
- Tying logic model with cost-effectiveness analysis to specifically examine outcomes of interventions and improvement strategies

Overall, the applicant plans to evaluate the effectiveness of RTT-D funded activities represents a high quality plan that demonstrates applicant's commitment to continuously improving this plan.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget narrative discusses other grant funded activities but the table does not identify specific state and federal souces of funding.The applicant documentation demonstrates a judicious plan for development and implementation for this ambitious proposal. The budget outline is supported by the nine projects that are important to the implementation of this proposal. All are critical to the success of this proposal. The budget aligns to the applicants overall proposal to provide equity and access for all students, teachers by implementing personalized learning environments for every student.

The budget is spread across a total of nine projects that are integral parts for applicant's proposal to implement personalized learning environments and provide equity and access to prepare students to graduate college- and career-ready

- Each project is supported by a budget which details expenditures
- Substantial investment in curriculum is justified as proposal has consistently expressed a need for building capacity for sustainability of this project is fundamental with training and providing teachers with the necessary resources
- Technology investment to insure all students have appropriate access to personalized learning

Overall, the applicant's budget for the project is justified and consistently demonstrates a thoughtful rationale in projecting funds needed for applicant's implementation and long-term sustainability of the personalized learning environments, however, it would have been helpful if the other funding sources had been identified and connected to the project based budgets.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The extent to which the applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goal after the term of the grant is reasonable and feasible. It would have been helpful if the reviewer had included budget assumptions for their State and local government financial support, however, the applicant has provided annual budgets to support the uses of funds after the term of the grant.

-
- Board of Education supported proposal and the question of sustainability was integral in their decision to support this proposal
- Board of Education has track record for supporting curriculum development and technology, which are majority of sustainability costs
- Annual budget details costs for sustainability expenditures after grant period
- Narrative does not include specific budgets for State and local government financial support

Overall, the applicant has presented a plan that is convincing for sustainability but is lacking some evidence to support sustainability after the term of the grant.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	10

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's Competitive Preference Priority proposal integrates services from both public and private in order to provide students identified as high needs with a comprehensive plan for high level social and emotional supports to support students and their families.

- Create a Parent Resource/Central Registration Center that is accessible for all parents and students
- center will be a hub for families to access community and school-based resources
- consolidate partnerships under one roof to more efficiently and effectively service families
- provide families with access to technology
- Provide library resources in multiple languages - 53 languages spoken by parents and students
- provide social, health, and educational services to families
- Performance measures will either enhance or create supports to increase parental involvement, increase student achievement, decrease achievement gap, truancy issues, and kindergarten readiness
- Partnerships with various providers for mental health, adult learning, housing authority, daycare,

Overall, the applicant has submitted a plan that is high-quality. The plan identifies ambitious yet achievable performance measures and deliverables to engage and improve parental involvement in order to increase student achievement.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has addressed Absolute Priority 1 by proposing a plan that demonstrates a strong vision to provide services to all students based on their already proven track record of success. The proposal addresses each core assurance and specific details comprehensively:

- The applicant has a track record of success with implementing pilots
- Building a foundation for personalized learning environments in order to improve and accelerate student achievement,
- Decrease achievement gaps, increase the effectiveness of educators, increase graduation rates for students in high school, and students graduate from high school college- and career- ready.
- A demonstrated model of how the element of time and consistent implementation of best practices can work effectively

The applicant's plan is strong and has the potential to become a statewide model based on its current successes and risk-taking innovations as steps toward creating personalized learning environments for which the RTT-D funding will provide.

		Available	Score
Total		210	203

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0509NH-3 for Nashua School District

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant articulates a comprehensive and coherent reform vision that builds on its work in four core educational assurance areas.

- Applicant's vision and plan provide quality strategies to prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace and compete in a global economy. One strategy is to to provide time beyond the school day and school year to develop a rigorous standards-based curriculum and meaningful assessments with clear rubrics that enable personalization to occur. By 2016, 80-90 % of all courses will conform to this design. Curriculum specialists and consulting teacher leaders will accomplish this task. Table A (1) (3) provides specific strategies and timelines that articulate a clear and credible approach to the goals.
- Applicant's vision and plan provides strategies to build data systems that measure student growth and success while informing teachers and principals with data about how to improve instruction. One strong strategy is to collect accurate data measuring student growth and success. Trained educators will then interpret data and make recommendations to data teams and administrators.

- Applicant's vision and plan provides strategies to recruit, develop, reward, and retain effective teachers and principals. One strategy is to support teachers and principals in obtaining National Board Certification.
- Applicant's vision and plan provides strategies to turn around lowest achieving schools. One strategy is to offer intervention programs based on learning progressions to ensure that students will be on grade level in literacy and numeracy by the end of the third grade. To accomplish this goal, Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) training will offer teachers tools for highly effective instruction and intervention for struggling readers.

The applicant's comprehensive, coherent reform vision includes goals, strategies, and project outcomes that offer a high-quality plan to provide a clear and credible approach to the goals of accelerating student achievement,deepened student learning, and increased equity through personalized student support based on student academic interests.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Applicant includes all students and educators in the proposal. Participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. Applicant's plan will serve Pre-K to 12 students including low-income and high needs young people. A strong component of the Applicant's plan is its inclusion of all student and educators to accomplish district-wide reform.

(b) A list of all schools with demographic data includes participating students from low-income families and three other subgroups. Participating schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. Participating schools are non-rural. A strong component of the Applicant's plan is its inclusion of four identified subgroups to target for greater student achievement through grant funds and projects.

(c) Approximately 11,859 students and 1568 educators will be participants in the Applicant's plan for its seventeen schools. A strong component of the Applicant's plan is its inclusion of all student and educators to accomplish district-wide reform.

The Applicant presents a strong approach to implementation that will support the execution of a high-quality reform plan for all educators and students.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant offers a high-quality plan that addresses system-wide change as well as the scaling-up of current programs.

- Applicant offers a quality plan to provide highly effective instruction to all students by offering quality professional development for all instructional personnel.
- Applicant recognizes the importance of the use of educational technology. Plan includes the purchase of equipment. Plan's primary focus on professional development for teachers and training for students offers a strong approach that will lead to to effective personalized learning.
- Applicant will scale-up current inquiry-based learning programs in the high schools through integration in its middle schools. This is an effective reform method to scale-up successful models and programs throughout a district.
- Applicant is converting to a competency-based system instead of a Carnegie unit-based graduation program. This plan reflects Applicant's adaptability and flexibility in its commitment to reform that successfully provides for personalized learning and alternative high school graduation programs.
- Applicant proposes expanding current, successful programs while investigating and implementing sound, instructional tools to support district-wide change. This is an excellent example of scaling-up current programs.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	10

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant's provision of data and its ambitious, achievable goals are evidence of a strong vision that will result in improved student learning and performance and increased equity.

(a) Applicant provides data related to performance on summative assessments including proficiency status and growth. The

Applicant is using the Brigance Inventory of Early Development which targets three outcomes including positive social-emotional skills. Methodology used to determine status is the percent of Pre-K students functioning within age expectations in each outcome by age 6 or program exit. Data provides guidance for improved student learning and performance and increased equity in pre-school and early elementary education.

(b) Applicant provides data to show decreasing achievement gaps. The methodology for determining the achievement gap is the percentage proficient of the Applicant. Data for IEP students in third grade math indicates a baseline of 9%. Applicant offers an achievable, reasonable progress goal of 2% for 2013-2014.

(c) Applicant provides data for graduation rates. The 2010-2011 graduation rate for IEP students is 66.04 while the overall rate is 84.63%. 2013-2014 graduation rate goal for IEP students is 92%% with overall target graduation rate also 92%. Goals are ambitious and achievable.

(d) Applicant provides data for student college enrollment rate. The 2011-2012 overall baseline rate is 64.3%. Applicant has a reasonable, achievable goal of 71% in 2013-2014.

(e) Applicant provides data for postsecondary degree attainment. The District overall baseline postsecondary degree attainment is 36% for 2010-2011. The goal for 2013-2014 is 66% which is both ambitious and achievable with planned reform.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	15

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant offers a record of success in the past four years in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in learning and teaching.

(a) Applicant data notes a decline in the drop-out rate from 11.1% in 2006-2007 to 5.7% in 2010-2011.

(b) Applicant has five high poverty Title I elementary schools with the percentage of students eligible for free/reduced-price lunches ranging from 65.8% to 81.2% (October 2011). These five schools have been among the lowest performing schools in the district over the last ten years. Four of the five Title I schools are in restructuring, with administrators and teaching staff focusing on improving student achievement in all subgroups. One of these low-performing schools, Ledge Street Elementary School, is demonstrating substantial success in improving student achievement on multiple measures, including attendance and NECAP results. The Applicant will scale-up the Ledge programs to achieve academic success in other Title I schools. This is a strong component of a high-quality reform plan.

(c) Student performance data is available in many ways. Data are published on the NH Department of Education website, and letters
go home to every parent of a participating student outlining and explaining the test results for his or her child. Additionally, last year the district began building an accountability page on its website providing information including a gap analysis in reading and math for low-income students and students with IEPs; district-developed elementary math benchmark assessment results; SAT participation rates; and Advanced Placement statistics; and attendance rates by grade level. Additional information will be added to this page on the NSD's website over time. Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, a family portal was established, providing middle and high school students and their parents with secure, online access to the student grade book and real-time student attendance. A parent has the option of receiving an email when his or her child receives less than a grade of "C" on an assignment listed in the grade book. Last, teachers have access to individual student data through Performance Pathways, a statewide software package supported by the NH Department of Education.

Applicant has presented strong evidence indicating its ability to successfully accomplish its goals.

	Available	Score
(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant presents evidence that demonstrates its high level of transparency in LEA processes, practices,and investments. The following are examples of high-levels of transparency within the Applicant's district:

- public review of school board budgets
- adherence to New Hampshire Right to Know laws
- salary postings online at district and state websites
- presentation of school financial records including personnel salaries and non-personnel expenditures

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant demonstrates strong components of successful conditions and sufficient autonomy under State legal, statutory, and regulatory requirements to implement the personalized learning environments described in the applicant's proposal.

- Applicant's state has taken a progressive approach to personalizing education and reducing the drop-out rate by establishing an innovative framework of minimum standards. The Applicant is then able to create graduation options that personalize learning for its students. This is a strong point to allow district-level implementation of a quality plan with high standards.
- Applicant's state framework supports local districts in creating approaches to personalizing education while leaving substantive decisions related to process and implementation to local school boards.
- Applicant's district has adopted policies which provide for local autonomy yet coordination with the State Race to the Top Grant.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

(a) Applicant provides description of participating groups including its mayor, US senator, state governor, and parent organizations. The teacher union assisted with gathering input for creation of grant proposal by providing an extensive venue for teacher ideas and solutions. Applicant gathered important, necessary "buy-in" through its inclusion of teachers.

(b) Applicant offers strong evidence of stakeholder support for the proposal with letters, minutes of meetings, transcript of school board meeting, and teacher/parent/student surveys. Stakeholder buy-in is integral to a successful plan and its implementation.

Applicant describes far-reaching, meaningful stakeholder engagement and support in the development of the proposal that will positively contribute to educational reforms and improvements throughout the district.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	5

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant has a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's current status in implementing personalized learning environments.

- Applicant will administer iReady three times a year to elementary students to provide formative math and reading assessments to personalize instruction. Assessment is a strong tool to personalize student instruction.

Applicant has a high-quality plan for an analysis of the applicant's logic behind the reform proposal contained within the applicant's proposal, including identified needs and gaps that the plan will address.

- Applicant's logic behind proposal undergirds the Applicant's entire plan. The Applicant links each component element of its high-quality plan (goal, strategy, activity, deliverable, responsible party, and timeline) to one of the four core educational reform areas.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

(a)

- (i) Applicant will provide opportunities for students to understand what they are learning as well as why the content is key to their success in accomplishing their goals. For example, Applicant has a High School Futures Committee investigating the return of advisories. Committee hopes to create for the 2013-2014 school year a modified block schedule to include time for an advisory opportunity for students to connect with adults in school and to work with guidance staff to create four-year plans and college application plans by utilizing Naviance software. Another option is a Community Mentor/Mentee Program which will provide selected high-need students in school, regardless of their age, with an adult mentor from the community who could advise them on career paths, assist with the college application process, and model successful academic and professional practices. Additionally, Applicant will use its Parent Resource Center (proposed in Competitive Preference Priority section) to extend learning and resources beyond the school.

With the support of parents and educators, students will understand that what they are learning is key to their success in accomplishing their goals.

- (ii) Applicant continues to sharpen its curricular focus on career paths for students. At the elementary level, student data, electronic portfolios, mentorships, and connections to the community allow young students to learn about their community and to expose more opportunities. Middle school students will access academic and technical courses to foster their potential for them to become lifelong learners and follow a career path. Expansion of the Applicant's Technology Center will allow outreach to middle school students by offering on-site visits, career planning, and student mentorship opportunities.

With the support of parents and educators, students will Identify and pursue learning and development goals linked to college- and career-ready standards, understand how to structure their learning to achieve their goals, and measure progress toward those goals;

- (iii) Applicant has extensive mechanisms to personalize learning for students in their areas of interest. For example, Applicant will provide workshops for students and parents on the on-line learning community for enriched and extended learning opportunities. This is a mechanism to allow students to be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

With the support of parents and educators, students will be involved in deep learning experiences in areas of academic interest.

- (iv) Applicant will provide access and exposure to diverse cultures, contexts, and perspectives that motivate and deepen individual student learning through Cultural Awareness Celebrations and expanded world language offerings with embedded history curriculum in non-traditional areas such as Arabic.

With the support of parents and educators, students will experience greater diversity in education, choices and knowledge.

- (v) Applicant includes in plan a shift in grading practices that focuses on competency-based learning and assessments. Additionally, Applicant provides individualized graduation plans for each student requiring goal-setting, communication, and problem-solving to persevere in reaching goals and the skills to modify and enrich learning goals.

With the help of parents and educators, students will master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

(b)

- (i) Applicant continues to sharpen its curricular focus on career paths for students. At the elementary level, student data, electronic portfolios, mentorships, and connections to the community allow young students to learn about their community and to expose more opportunities. Middle school students will access academic and technical courses to foster their potential for them to become lifelong learners and follow a career path. Expansion of the Applicant's Technology Center will allow outreach to middle school students by offering on-site visits, career planning, and student mentorship opportunities. College and career curriculum revision at the high school level is being accelerated. Considerable professional development is required to ensure that the Applicant makes informed decisions to provide innovative choices and engaging career curriculum for all students.

With the support of parents and educators, Applicant offers a strong strategy to ensure that each student has access to a personalized sequence of instructional content and skill development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals and ensure he or she can graduate on time and college- and career-ready.

- (ii, iii, iv) Applicant embraces world language study as an important facet of college and career readiness. Applicant is restructuring curriculum to align with the Common Core State Standards and 21st Century Skills in a competency-based learning environment Using Wiggins and McTighe's Understanding by Design model to revise curriculum, the NSD has moved beyond traditional learning methods to incorporate inquiry-based learning experiences and performance assessments, which allow more student choices. It will also foster more personalized learning and instruction through the use of digital resources. Additionally, teachers will present all students with real-life, relevant problems and encourage them to use Internet resources, laptops, as well as tablets to collaborate, to analyze and synthesize what they learn,and then record, document and present what they find using multi-media tools. Also, considerable professional development will be provided to enable the Applicant to make informed decisions to provide innovative and engaging career curriculum for all students.

With the support of parents and educators, Applicant offers a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environment

- (v) Applicant will expand current practices, such as providing personalized and data-driven standardized test preparation for all students including high-need students who will be able to better track their progress through increased outreach to students and parents regarding college- and career readiness resources. High need students will also benefit from expanded use of technology which can better accommodate learning styles, language learning, and access to highly effective teachers through varied digital learning platforms.

With the support of parents and educators, Applicant employs a feasible strategy to ensure that each high-need student has access to

accommodations to help ensure that they are on track toward meeting college- and career-ready standards/graduation requirements.

(c) Students will receive training from many sources including teachers and computer technology specialists,and sites such as the Parent Resource Center. Also, as Applicant more frequently utilizes and leverages tablet technology, teachers and students will increase utility of varied technology. Additionally, Applicant includes a chart of goals linked with vision, activities, deliverables, timeline, and responsible party(ies) that emphasize that the structure and organization of Applicant's district has mechanisms in place to provide training and support for students to use the tools and resources to track and manage their learning.

| (C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points) | 20 | 19 |

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant's high-quality plan provides for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment in order to provide all students the support to graduate college- and career-ready. Applicant includes quality components to its plan to accomplish its district-wide reform including the following:

- Applicant will establish a K-12 learner expectation program focusing on non-cognitive skills needed for every college- and career-ready student in the 21st Century. The program will be incorporated into the daily activities of every teacher in every content area district-wide and will mark the first time that there is a real continuum of educational thinking and habits of mind across all grade levels . Program is integral part of plan.
- Applicant will create a curriculum review team made up of consulting teachers at each school. This will increase communication among teachers.
- Applicant will use summer institutes to train teachers and administrators to be more adapt observers and will address inter-rater reliability. This will provide more efficient student and teacher assessment to achieve greater educational reforms to increase student achievement.
- Applicant will offer professional development around curriculum, standards, progressions, and data driven assessments like i-Ready. Applicant will assist all teachers in reaching the needs of each individual student.This will help to accomplish a greater degree of personalized learning for each student.
- Applicant will focus on effective instruction and access to 21st Century learning tools, including a data driven reporting system and an innovative learning practices. This will provide tools for more accurate, systematic data collection to improve assessment and student learning plans.
- Applicant includes an excellent chart that addresses goals with timelines, deliverables, project outcomes, responsible parties,and activities. This is an element of a high-quality plan.
- Applicant did not provide information and strategies related to the recruitment of difficult-to-staff instructional positions.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	15

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant offers a strong plan to support project implementation through comprehensive policies and infrastructure that provide every student, educator,and level of the education system with the needed support and resources.

(a) LEA central office is able to support all schools and educators in reform effort. Additional staff that will be hired to manage grant, schools, and educators will be coordinated by the LEA central office personnel. Applicant has strong plan to provide necessary personnel to provide training and support for students and educators.

(b) School leadership teams will be established in schools to incorporate best practices, engagements, and plans for students. Evidence of school autonomy is the annual submission of the Building Action Plan to the district. Applicant has strong framework to gather teacher ideas to support school reform and student achievement by improving instruction.

(c) District is transitioning to a credit system based on mastery, not Carnegie units. Alternative credit system is mentioned with the example of an automotive student who earned " credit" for an apprenticeship with NASCAR.. Additionally, the inclusion of multi-tier graduation system offers students additional demonstrative opportunities for mastery. A credit system based on mastery will provide personalized learning opportunities for students and support reform.

(d) District continues to train educators in methods and programs coupled with student choices that facilitate varied learner paths to demonstration of mastery. Applicant's plan offers a strong professional development component to support reform.

(e) All students are encouraged to pursue individual interests that are not offered in the traditional school day through personalized learning plans like Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO). ELO is a quality, personalized learning tool that is fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English learners.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	5

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant does not provide a high quality plan for the LEA and school infrastructure to support personalized learning.

- A: Access is inadequately addressed through narrative related to resource center in Competitive Priority Preference section.
- B: Plan focuses on recent addition of multiple curriculum specialists within schools, proposed grant manager position paid for with RTT-D funds, and expanding technology trainers, support, and coordinators. Strategies for support are inadequate.
- C: Exporting information in an open data format is not addressed.
- D: Interoperable data systems are not addressed.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	15

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant offers a high-quality plan to provide for adjustments and revisions during implementation.

1. Applicant's logic model explicates the theory underlying the plan and provides a causal map for the achievement of desired outcomes. The district data team (with support from outside experts, as needed) will design and drive a comprehensive program evaluation model that addresses all outcomes and performance measures. Using the logic model to guide evaluation will ensure data collection is organized by program element. A logic- model driven evaluation also ensures evidence gathered around a particular program element is interpreted in light of expected relationships with program antecedents and consequences. The evaluation will be designed to address the outcome and performance measures.
2. Support for the improvement teams will include:

- Professional development sessions exploring the basic tenets and processes of evaluation.
- Integration of existing avenues of exploration (including Instructional Rounds) into the evaluation and improvement process.
- Coaching and mentoring as individuals work in partnership with professional evaluators.
- Ongoing facilitation and support for improvement teams.

   3. Applicant offers a district-wide showcase of schools and students to the community to share information and to receive feedback from stakeholders.

(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant has multiple, quality methods of ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders.

- The District Improvement Process will build on existing successful mechanisms.
- Applicant will provide varied forums and feedback mechanisms to publicly revisit the progress of the RTT-D initiative. This will provide opportunities to receive public feedback to revise action plans as needed.
- Applicant regularly updates information on district and individual school websites. Included on the website are a transparent budget process and the Applicant's strategic plan.
- The Applicant sends out a weekly electronic newsletter to approximately 9,000 subscribers.
- The Applicant provides a showcase of district schools and programs to receive feedback from stakeholders as well as to provide information.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides data for overall and subgroup performance measures with annual targets for required and applicant-proposed performance measures although some meaures indicate a larger improvement percentage than what is possible from the base score.

(a) Applicant offers measures that support its rationale of using data to improve student achievement, close achievement gaps, and personalize learning. Applicant includes all students including low-income students and the SPED and ELL populations. Applicant also explains the use of data to chart student promotions, retention, attendance, and college/career readiness.

(b) Applicant measures provide information to allow Applicant to evaluate plan for revision, implementation, and sustainability. Applicant will measure changes in academic achievement and student choices resulting from the acquisition of new technology including laptops and tablets.

(c) Some measures indicate a larger improvement percentage than what is possible from the base score.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant thoroughly addresses plans to evaluate the effectiveness of Race to the Top- district funded activities. The following are examples of high-quality components of the Applicant's plan to evaluate its grant activities:

1. Applicant will use cost effectiveness analysis to specifically examine the costs and outcomes of intervention and improvement strategies. Results will be presented as cost-effectiveness ratios, expressing cost per outcome (e.g. cost per increase in the number of highly qualified teachers or for increased graduation rates). Tying this analysis directly to the logic model will enable the district to determine which programs are effective as well as the efficiencies and costs associated with alternative approaches. This is a positive method to analyze utility and allocation of funds.
2. Applicant with evaluate the effectiveness of investments is critical during the period of grant funding. RTT-D funding will enable Applicant to rapidly scale-up and disseminate effective practices that create measurable, positive impacts for its students. This is a positive component to effectively to distribute funds, programs, accountability, and successes throughout the district.
3. Applicant will monitor long-term investments like funds used for professional development activities. These investments will be monitored through evaluative processes administered on a regular schedule.
4. Applicant will use Consulting Teacher Leaders in various ways. Teacher leaders will work with teachers to embed what is learned from workshops into classroom practice. Teacher leaders will also be periodically surveyed to evaluate the longer term impact of professional development.
5. Applicant will evaluate investments in technology through ongoing staff surveys and focus questions. Applicant will survey Technology Integration Teachers who will routinely work with classroom teachers to effectively integrate technology into instruction.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Applicant provides detailed budgets for each of its nine projects; however, the budget does not identify all funds that will support the project nor does it offer a coherent, comprehensive budget for entire grant.

(a) Applicant's budget identifies funds that will support the project; however, it does not identify state and federal funds.

(b) Applicant's budget offers a separate budget for each of the proposal's nine projects. Although providing justification for the funding of each project, the connection between the projects and the grant proposal is somewhat confusing. Total grant budget needs to be provided with greater clarity and completeness for funding of grant.

(c) Applicant offers thoughtful rationale for priorities and investments including professional development, curriculum

realignment with Common Core Standards, and technical improvements which will increase personalized learning and student achievement.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	10

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The Applicant has a high-quality plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant.

- Applicant's plan includes budget with quality narrative explaining past history of sustainability of continued projects as well as potential sources and uses of funds.
- Applicant provides details about its full commitment to sustainability of project goals as well as time-limited activities through included minutes of Board of Education minutes.
- Applicant addresses that although the budget provides for numerous personnel positions, using the train-the-trainer approach for professional develoment will allow the Applicant to reassign faculty for term positions while allowing subsequent returns to classroom assignments.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	7

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Applicant offers a plan for a community and school resource which will support student learning and readiness through efforts to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of its students giving highest priority to students in participating schools with its ELL and low-income students as well as the general student population including SPED students. Applicant does not provide sufficient details related to the center's connection to student achievement and personalized learning.

(1,4) The Applicant partners with community agencies with the goal of benefiting students and their families. RTT-D funds will be used to lease a centrally located facility on or near a city bus route, which will serve as a central registration site for all incoming and internal transfer students. It will also be a community resource center for families. A component of the center will be the provision of bilingual translators to serve migrant workers and other minority populations. Another component will be its "one-stop shop" approach to emotional and financial counseling services .

(2,3,5,6) Applicant includes a comprehensive chart with Parent Resource/Central Registration Center goals, deliverables, activities, timelines, responsible parties, and link to vision for each required assurance. Budget is complete with accompanying narrative of plans for sustainability with district paying building lease costs at end of grant. Applicant does not offer a plan for selection of clients. Also, it is unclear how the center will positively impact student achievement.

Applicant offers a plan for a community and school resource which will support student learning and readiness through strong efforts to address the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of its students giving highest priority to students in participating schools with its ELL and low-income students as well as the general student population including SPED students.

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Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

Applicant coherently and comprehensively meets Absolute Priority 1 in its responses to the selection criteria. First, the Applicant designs nine projects which build on the core educational assurance areas. Second, all activities and programs are

designed to significantly improve learning and teaching through the personalization of strategies, tools, and supports for students and educators that are aligned with college- and career-ready standards and graduation requirements. Applicant provides information about flexible graduation requirements which offer creative, standards-based programs that personalize learning for its students. Applicant describes programs that will accelerate student achievement and deepen student learning by meeting the academic needs of each student through using technology while providing more highly effective educators to students, decreasing achievement gaps across student groups and increasing graduation rates and skills for both career and college-ready students.

Applicant meets Absolute Priority 1.

Total		210	196